

RIO GRANDE COUNTY

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

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Rio Grande County
Board of County Commissioners
925 6th Street
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BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS
Dennis Murphy, Jr.
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Vice Chairman
Karla Shriver
Commissioner

Forest Supervisor Dan Dallas
District Ranger Tom Malecek
Rio Grande National Forest
Divide Ranger District
13308 West Highway 160
Del Norte, CO 81132

Re: Scoping Comment – Land Exchange for The Village At Wolf Creek.

ADMINISTRATION OFFICE:
ADMINISTRATOR
Suzanne L. Benton
H.R./Financial Officer
Kristy Dennis

Supervisor Dallas and Ranger Malecek:

The Rio Grande County Board of County Commissioners would like to congratulate you and your staff for the admirable job you've done to make the USFS available to answer questions about the proposed land exchange and development at Wolf Creek and the process by which the public can become involved. We also commend you for your clear statement in your Scoping Notice that the Purpose and Need for the Exchange is to grant access for The Village at Wolf Creek.

As we're sure you are aware, this development has been in the planning stages for quite some time. The Board is glad to see that the USFS is finally on a path to grant access to the landowner. We are confident you and your staff will complete the EIS with your usual professionalism. We look forward to reviewing your DEIS later this year.

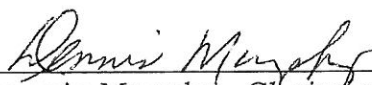
This project will bring economic benefits to communities on both sides of the divide. Those economic benefits should be included in your DEIS. Southern Colorado has seen a slow recovery from the lingering recession. Your study should not overlook the real stimulus effects of private capital being invested in our area. This project will not only bring thousands of jobs to our area, but


will also renew our tourist industry. With these benefits in mind, you should make sure the EIS process does not become delayed. This project deserves to be granted access in a timely manner.

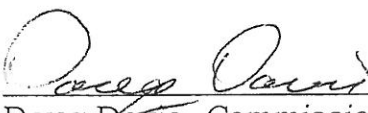
Your Scoping Notice states that the EIS will consider the impacts on federal land. We request the DEIS also consider the benefits that a resort on private property will bring to the users of the public lands leased to the ski area. We believe that a one-sided impact study does not tell the full tale. It is within the USFS's mandate to complete a comprehensive impact, and benefit, analysis. The Forest Service must produce a DEIS that can withstand a legal challenge. Far too often these days, we see special interest groups that are unable to sway the majority of citizens to their anti-development position resort the courts to stop worthwhile projects. Your DEIS should be completed with those tactics of minority groups in mind.

We are pleased to see that the ski area operator and the developer have come together to support the Exchange. We are also pleased to see The Village garnering so much public support on both sides of the divide. It is a welcome change.

Sincerely,


Dennis Murphy, *Chairman*


Karla Shriver, *Commissioner*


Doug Davie, *Commissioner*